



ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2005-2010



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“Taking into account the development dimension, ISO parties shall contribute to actions to help its members from developing countries improve their capacity and their participation in international standardization”

ISO Code of Ethics, June 2004

Introduction to ISO

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is the world’s largest developer of voluntary standards. ISO’s core activity is the development of technical standards, but its scope is expanding in the areas of services, management practices and conformity assessment. ISO standards, therefore, have a growing economic and social impact.

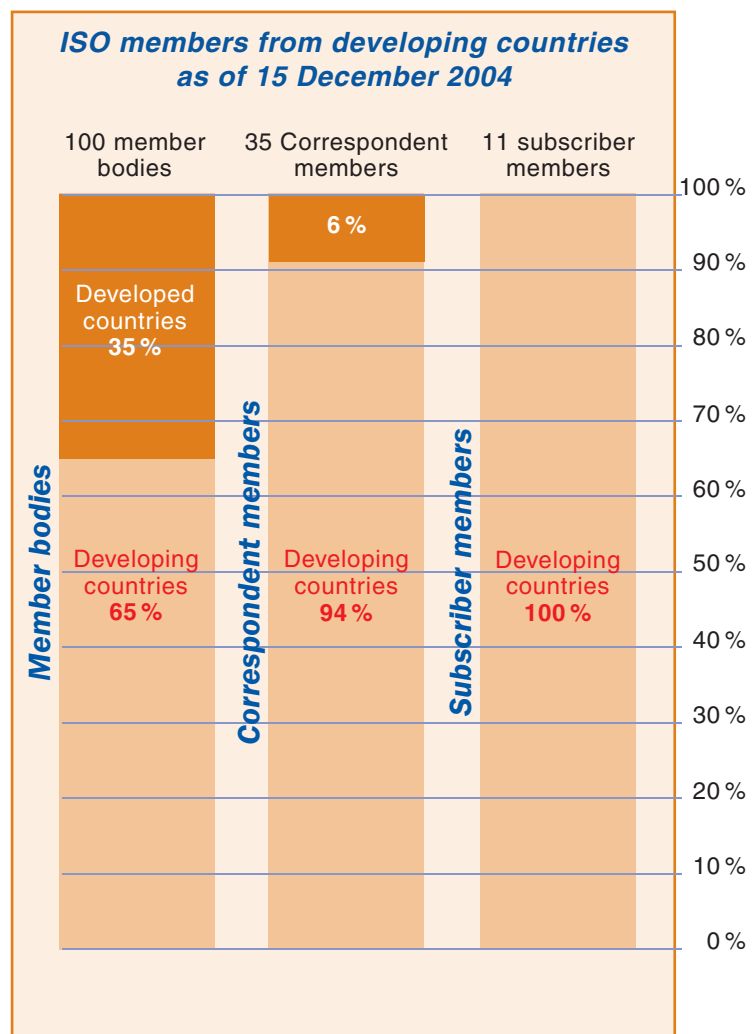
ISO standards contribute to making the development, manufacturing and supply of products and services safer, more efficient and environment friendly. They make trade between countries easier and fairer. They provide governments with a technical base for health, safety and environmental requirements. They aid in transferring technology and good business practices to developing countries. ISO standards also serve to safeguard consumers, and users in general, of products and services – as well as to make their lives simpler.

Globalization of trade and of many other issues, such as health, safety or environmental protection, have greatly increased the relative importance of International Standards as compared with national and regional ones. The majority of national standardization bodies in industrialized countries, as well as the private sector in those countries, devote increasing resources to the development and use of International Standards, as well as to their dissemination to, and implementation by, economic players.



ISO and developing countries

It is important that developing countries have access to International Standards and increase their participation in international standardization and conformity assessment activities and, consequently, benefit from the transfer of technology that standards make possible, in adapting their products and services to global requirements and in demonstrating their compliance with world market needs. This can result in greater competitiveness, growing market share and higher price of exports. It can also result in improved resistance to undesirable low quality imports or in increased competitiveness for attracting investment or procurement and stimulating economic activity. Finally, it may facilitate the development and effectiveness of infrastructures, networks and investment.





Five key objectives for 2010

The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) sets the following five objectives for 2010:

1 *Improve awareness of key stakeholders in developing countries of the role of standardization in economic growth, world trade and sustainable development*

The awareness of public authorities, industry and other economic players in developing countries of the importance of International Standards is key to their economic development. This is particularly important for the dissemination of technology, the improvement of the quality of products and services, and the promotion of good business and management practices. Targeted awareness-raising campaigns aim at strengthening national standardization infrastructures and related activities, such as metrology, testing, certification and accreditation.

2 *Build capacity of ISO members and stakeholders involved in developing the standardization infrastructure and participating in international standardization work*

Ensuring the implementation and use of International Standards, participating actively in standardization activities of direct importance to the national economy and accessing the relevant information, requires an effective infrastructure, appropriate tools and qualified staff in the national and regional bodies in charge of standardization. The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) aims to encourage and assist developing countries in identifying their priorities and developing the adequate capacity for their active involvement in international standardization.

Sustainable development is not an objective that a country, or a region, can pursue in isolation. The importance of raising awareness, capacity and participation of developing countries is therefore high on ISO's agenda. Some 110 of the 146 ISO members are from developing countries or economies in transition. This has prompted ISO and its members to develop actions to assist in improving the standardization infrastructures and capacities in developing countries and to enhance their participation in relation to international standardization and related conformity assessment activities.

In September 2004, the ISO Council endorsed the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2005-2010](#), which represents the implementation, for developing countries, of the [ISO Strategic Plan 2005-2010](#) that outlines the global vision for the Organization in 2010. The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) is based on a broad consultation of ISO members and international organizations through contacts, surveys and regional seminars.

3 *Increase national and regional cooperation to share experience, resources, training, information and communications technologies*

The regional and sub-regional levels of cooperation on standardization and related matters are those most suitable for sharing experience, organizing training, optimizing participation in International Standardization and ensuring consistent implementation of International Standards. The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) seeks to foster relationships between standards bodies in developing countries and regional and sub-regional organizations and to coordinate the development of capacity with a view to building synergies and developing partnerships.

4 *Develop electronic communication and expertise in IT tools to participate in international standardization work, reach out to stakeholders and make efficient use of ISO e-services*

Reaching out to stakeholders, as well as accessing and participating in international standardization, requires the ability to use and implement electronic communication and IT tools. The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) aims to assist ISO members in developing countries to strengthen their information and communication technology infrastructures and to encourage the use of the comprehensive range of e-services and IT tools developed by ISO and made available to its members.

5 *Increase participation in governance and technical work of ISO to voice priorities, contribute and influence the technical content of ISO deliverables*

The fifth objective of the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) is to support the involvement of developing countries in the governance structures of ISO, at policy making level and in the technical work performed by ISO's technical committees,

subcommittees and working groups. By participating at these three levels, developing countries ensure that their interests are taken into account and, in doing this, they contribute to strengthening ISO's global relevance.

ACTIONS

The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) defines a number of actions intended to mobilise its members, regional organizations and donor agencies. The actions are aimed at promoting developing country participation in ISO, building capacity through technical assistance programmes and enhancing interactions at regional and international levels.

Making the best of membership in ISO

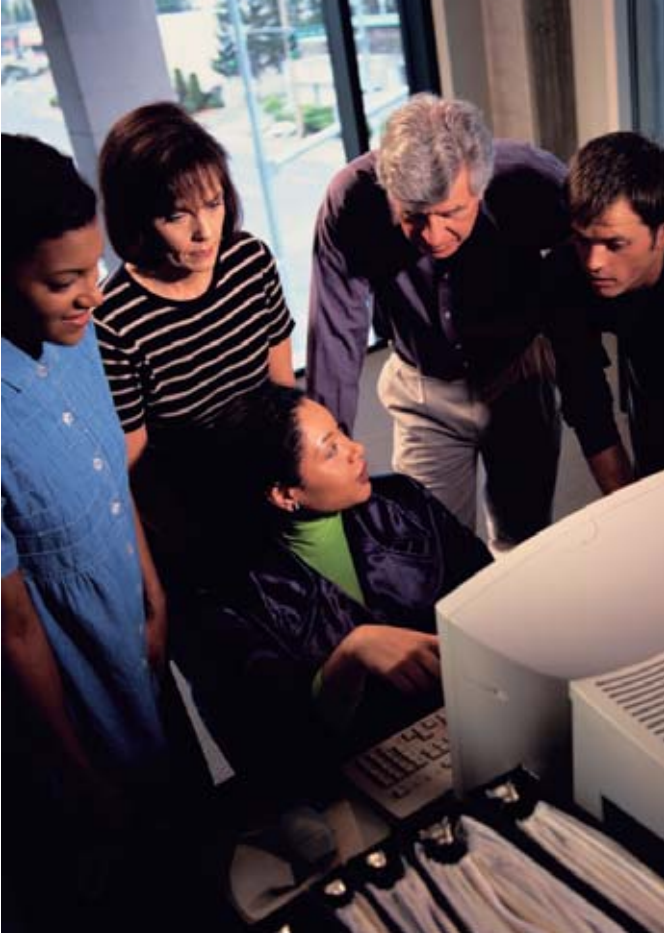
- involving developing countries in the ISO governance structures, enhancing the role of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO) and encouraging membership upgrades ;
- providing basic assistance to ISO members regarding access to generic information and to e-services made available by the ISO Central Secretariat ;
- encouraging and enhancing participation in ISO's technical work.

Supplying targeted assistance and training

- developing training services and targeted educational material ;
- providing assistance in the usage and implementation of information and communication tools.

Involving regions, international organizations and donor agencies

- promoting regional cooperation ;
- fostering partnerships with international organizations and donor agencies.



Funding of technical assistance projects

ISO is not itself a funding agency. The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) is therefore dependent on technical and financial assistance received from its members, international development and aid agencies, governments and donor organizations involved in assistance to developing countries.

Donations by ISO members from both industrialized and developing countries constitute the Funds-in-trust for the implementation of the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#). Contributions from external sources to ISO are used to finance specific projects jointly agreed between ISO, the donor and the final beneficiaries.

The technical assistance projects carried out within the framework of the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) are designed in such a way that donor agencies are able to implement their own priorities with respect to the kind of assistance offered and in relation to regions or groups of countries of particular interest to them.



Administration of the ISO Action Plan for developing countries

The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) is administered by the *Development and Training Programmes (DEVT)* unit at the ISO Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland.

The following principles are applied in selecting and deciding on the priority to be given to technical assistance projects :

Objective oriented: to deliver technical assistance in accordance with the objectives stated in the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) ;

Topic oriented: to respond to the needs and requirements expressed by ISO members in developing countries ;

Delivery oriented: to provide high-level technical assistance deliverables, organised in the form of projects and using best suited delivery methods ;

Geographically distributed: to benefit, in an equitable manner over time, all ISO members in developing countries and the eight ISO liaison regions.



Monitoring of the ISO Action Plan for developing countries

The [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) is monitored by the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO) and its Chair's Advisory Group (DEVCO CAG). 117 ISO members from developed and developing countries are members of DEVCO. DEVCO meets annually and, in addition to its monitoring role, offers an international forum for the discussion of all aspects of standardization and related activities in developing countries.

The DEVCO CAG consists of nine members, with two-thirds of the members from developing countries, and one-third from developed countries. The CAG meets twice a year and assists DEVCO in monitoring the implementation of the [Action Plan for developing countries](#).

To monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the technical assistance projects, DEVCO and its Chair's Advisory Group use a number of key performance indicators. These indicators measure developing country participation, capacity building and the overall impact of the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#).

The deliverables

The technical assistance and training activities derived from the [ISO Action Plan for developing countries](#) respond to a wide variety of needs and requests received from ISO members in developing countries and their stakeholders. These deliverables take the form of seminars, workshops, training courses, e-learning, sponsorships, ICT (Information and communication technologies) support and training of trainers programmes in all aspects of standardization and related activities of which some examples are listed below:

Role of Standards in economic development

To raise awareness of the role of the national standards and conformity assessment infrastructure in economic development and in promoting world trade. In particular, this activity is aimed at mobilising resources for standards development.

ICT Support

Assessment of the use of Information and communication technologies (ICT) by ISO members in developing countries and at sub-regional and regional levels; provision of consultancy, hardware, software and training material to develop ICT infrastructures.

Developing country involvement in international standardization

Provision of guidance and support to developing countries on the benefits of participating in ISO technical work; training of officers from developing countries to prepare for ISO technical committee secretariat functions.

Training services in standards development

Training services to ISO members focused on the transfer of knowledge and refinement of skills needed to deal with the requirements associated with International Standards development, production and dissemination; training courses and e-learning conducted by experts from the ISO Central Secretariat.

Conformity assessment and good regulatory practices

Training and information on guidelines to enhance national conformity assessment infrastructures and facilitate the mutual recognition of conformity assessment results between nations. Training and awareness of good regulatory practices and the use of standards focusing on improving technical regulations in order to deliver the necessary public policy results.

Management systems

In-depth training and information on the benefits and conditions for the implementation of ISO management systems for quality and the environment and in a range of sectors including food, health, tourism and automotive.

Social responsibility and consumer protection

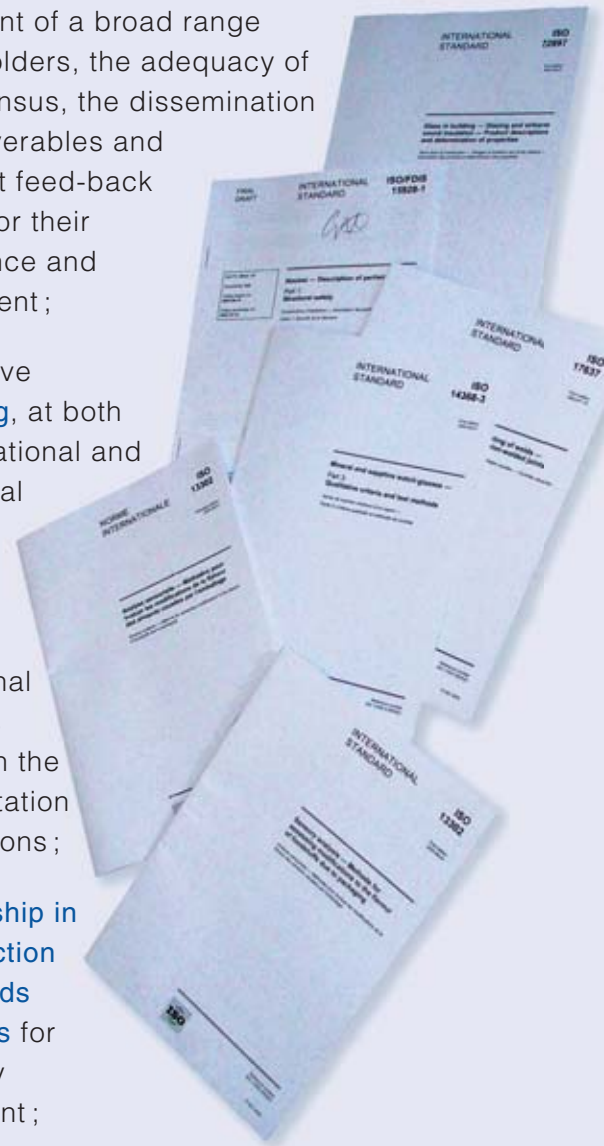
Training in, and awareness of, ISO's initiatives in the area of social responsibility and the role of consumers in the standards-making process.



ISO's added value

ISO's added value is based on :

- **recognized experience** in international consensus building ;
- a **brand name** and **wide recognition** on the world scene ;
- a **diversified scope**, a broad range of deliverables and cross-sector consistency ;
- its **strong national membership base**, which ensures, through the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, the adequacy of the consensus, the dissemination of its deliverables and the market feed-back required for their maintenance and development ;
- its extensive **networking**, at both the international and the regional levels ;
- the **ability to provide** International Standards to assist in the implementation of regulations ;
- its **leadership in the production of standards and guides** for conformity assessment ;
- its **leadership in regard to the use of IT tools** for the production and dissemination of standards.





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